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LETTER DATED 18 FEBRUARY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZAMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On 17 February 1999, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zambia, K. S. Walubita, issued a press statement on the problems between Angola and Zambia. I request that this press statement, which I attach, be circulated as a document of the Security Council (see annex).

(Signed) Peter L. KASANDA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Press statement issued on 17 February 1999 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zambia

On 27 January 1999, I issued a Press Release stating that on 14 January 1999 I had received a letter from the former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Angola, Honourable Venancio de Moura, informing me that his Government had "credible information that confirms a large involvement of the Zambian authorities in the logistic and military support sent to Dr. Jonas Savimbi inside Angola, to perpetuate war and the suffering of the Angolan people".

Upon receipt of this letter, the Zambian Government in accordance with normal diplomatic practice, requested the Angolan Government to provide the alleged credible information so that it could be thoroughly investigated. This information was officially received on 4 February 1999 in the form of a Memorandum dated 15 January 1999 and is hereby released for general information. Since then, the Angolan Government has released various versions of the Memorandum through its Missions abroad.

When the first round of allegations were made, a Task Force under the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee carried out verification missions during the course of 1997. In addition to this, Joint Angola/Zambia Inspection Team verification missions were conducted in March 1998 to areas allegedly being used to transport arms to UNITA. In both cases, there was no evidence of the alleged activities found.

The Government of Zambia also eagerly welcomed the initiative by the United Nations to send a verification mission in April 1998 led by Ambassador Njuguna Mahugu, of Kenya, who was then Chairman of the United Nations Security Council Committee on Sanctions on UNITA.

In May 1998, the Organization of African Unity also sent a verification mission led by Ambassador Daniel Antonio, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Both the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity cleared Zambia of these allegations.

On a number of occasions and at different fora, the Zambian Government and the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament have unreservedly condemned UNITA for undermining the peace process under the Lusaka Protocol.

At the multilateral level, in September 1998, the Zambian Government was party to a decision taken at the SADC Heads of State Summit in Mauritius, to declare Dr. Jonas Savimbi a war criminal.

In addition to this, at the OAU Central Organ Summit held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 17 December 1998 the Zambian Government was party against the resumption of hostilities by UNITA and appealed for compliance in fulfilling the Lusaka Protocol.

The Government of Zambia would like to state that it has complied with the United Nations Security Council resolutions against UNITA and has communicated this information to the United Nations.

It is also a matter of record that Zambia has played a pivotal role in the liberation of Southern Africa, including that of Angola. It is, therefore, inconceivable that Zambia would be associated with any activities which would be detrimental to the peace and stability of Angola and the subregion as a whole.

I would like to remind my fellow Zambians and the international community that the war in Angola had been going on long before the MMD came into power in November 1991. The MMD Government, however, invested 14 months of its energy and resources to facilitate the peace process that culminated into the signing of the Lusaka Protocol on 20 November 1994.

In fact, our position throughout the negotiation of the Lusaka Protocol was to encourage both parties to reach a political settlement. Zambia also contributed troops and civilians to the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Angola. Some of these Zambians have made the ultimate sacrifice by paying with their own blood and lives for peace in Angola.

The Zambian Government finds it a strange coincidence that the allegations are intensifying when our mediation efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have reached an advanced stage.

The Government of Zambia has, meanwhile, sent letters of complaint to the Chairman of the Southern African Development Community, His Excellency Mr. Nelson Mandela, the Chairman of the SADC organ on Politics, Defence and Security, His Excellency Mr. Robert Mugabe, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan and the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, formally inviting them to send missions to Zambia to establish the veracity of these allegations.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming our commitment to promoting good-neighbourliness with Angola and our desire to see Angola attain durable peace so that the country and the subregion can develop in a stable political environment.